FINAL

Minutes of the Meeting of
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District
Board of Governors
March 14, 2026
Charlestown police Station
Meeting Room
4901 Old Post Rd, Charlestown, RI 02813

Members in attendance: Al Bartosic, Renee Cohen, Bob Frazier, Julie Low, Barry Okun, and Debbie Dupre.

Members Absent: Mark Alperin, Ray Martino, Ron Ruel and Bill Wilson.

Also in attendance Mark McEnroe, Roy Jacobsen and George Prior.

1. Call to Order/Moderator's Opening Remarks **Moderator, Al Bartosic**

Al called the meeting to order at 9:01 am. He thanked everyone for being there.

2. Approval of the Minutes **Clerk, Debbie Dupre**

There were no edits or comments to the draft January 10, 2026 minutes. A **motion** was made to approve the minutes as drafted. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (except the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Debbie raised the possibility of moving the August 13, 2026 BoG meeting. Discussion ensued and it was agreed that the meeting would remain as calendared and Debbie would verify that no additional steps need to be taken to hold the meeting without the Moderator.

Next Debbie reported that discussions were held with RI counsel around best practices for governance and oversight of contractual obligations taken on by the District and specifically whether executing new contracts outside the normal course on behalf of the District required Board approval on amounts less than $5000. Counsel recommended that though not required under the Bylaws, all contracts should be approved by the Board and that a policy of governance and oversight should be developed and adopted by the BoG to standardize how it will handle District contractual obligations. Al added that by adopting a policy rather than amending the Bylaws, future governors could modify these standards by adopting a new policy without going to the community. Debbie agreed to prepare a draft governance and oversight policy to be reviewed by the BoG at a future meeting.

3. Moderator's Report **Moderator, Al Bartosic**

Al reported that he had received a complaint that the snow in the roads following one of the large storms had not been plowed wide enough to accommodate the fire trucks. He responded that given the record-breaking quantity of snow that had fallen, the plow struggled to clear a path the full 15 feet needed. Discussion ensued. The Public Works committee will continue to monitor the situation. No further action is required.

Al then updated the Board on the unresolved leak(s) that had been caused excessive water usage since last November. Multiple leaks were found. Questions were asked about the labor needed to find the leaks and the quantity of water lost over the last few months. Suggestions were made how best to alert the community of future leaks, including notification of property caretakers and making a formal presentation on the issue at the Annual Meeting (quantifying gallons of water lost, cost of property damage incurred and hours of manpower spent). Al thanked George Prior, Tom Frost and Bob Frazier for all their efforts in monitoring flow through the water system.

The discussion turned to the possibility of installing meters at each house to monitor water usage. Al confirmed that QCBFD could install meters to monitor usage but cannot charge for water based on this usage without changing the charter. It was agreed that a water distribution task force will be stood up under the Long-Range Planning Committee to look at house metering – how it works, the cost and a potential pilot program. Al and Renee will work together to identify prospective members. The task force will aim to report to the BoG in June with the intention of presenting their recommendations at the Annual Meeting.

Al gave an update on the lease renewal between QCBFD and the Quonochontaug Tennis Club. Al spoke with his counterpart at Quonochontaug East Beach Association ("QEBA"), and they agreed to take a joint approach. A lease renewal task force comprised of Ray Martino (QCBFD), John Behan (QEBA) and George Steinman (QEBA) has been stood up. The group has met and plan to report back on their progress at the next BoG meeting.

4. Treasurer's Report **Al Bartosic for the Treasurer, Ray Martino**

Al reported that Ray has secured a new RI tax exemption certificate. He reminded everyone that QCBFD is exempt from sales tax and this certificate provides proof should a vendor ask for evidence of the District's exempt status.

5. Committee Chairs' Reports

Long-Range Planning **Chair, Renee Cohen**

Renee reported that she has kicked off the cloud-storage provider assessment and has begun reaching out to other RI fire districts about how they handle document storage. She will update the board on the relative pros and cons after she has connected with other fire districts. She hopes to interview cloud-storage vendors over the summer and have final recommendations later in the year. Debbie agreed to help in the selection process.

The Long-Range Planning ("LRP") committee has sent out a request for volunteers with a communications background with a March 15th deadline. Renee will provide an update at the May meeting.

Next, Renee updated the group on pulling together a task force to inventory the existing water distribution system (identifying each component, its life span, cost to replace and when and how to begin the required capital buildup to cover replacement). Both George Prior and Tom Frost from Public Works have agreed to join. Renee is looking for someone from Finance as well as LRP. Renee also suggested that the group will need help from our water management company, Northeast Water Management. Discussion ensued around the need to begin building a capital reserve for updating and/or replacing the water distribution system and expanded to other District assets and the need to build a capital reserve for those as well (such as roads, tennis courts, playground equipment, beach fencing, parking lot, ball field and court, marina). Renee agreed to add that to the list of future LRP projects.

Finance and Budget **Chair, Barry Okun**

Barry reported that the required FY2025 financial statement information has been filed with the state. The District FY 2025 financial performance was strong compared to the budget – with a cash surplus remaining after adding a portion to the reserve fund. The reserve fund currently holds upward of $500,000. Discussion ensued regarding the fungibility of the funds and governance considerations around reallocating funds as needed. Barry noted that the RI Auditor General confirmed that the District will remain classified as a Tier 3 entity and will not be subject to additional reporting requirements at this time.

Next Barry reviewed the financing for the water upgrade project, reminding everyone of the two primary funding sources: a loan from the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank ("RIIB") of up to $1,555,000 and a federal grant of $1,000,000 administered by the Environmental Protection Agency. To date, approximately $826,000 of grant funds have been received and disbursed, with about $173,000 remaining. The project is progressing well, with the federal compliance requirements being met. Final closeout will require a detailed EPA review of documentation and adherence to federal requirements.

With respect to the RIIB loan, approximately $150,000 has been drawn to date. The District plans to borrow approximately $250,000 to cover the required cost-share under the EPA grant and an additional $300,000 to reimburse monies spent by the District prior to construction. The loan carries favorable terms, ~3.25 percent interest rate, a $100,000 forgiveness component, and flexibility for prepayment. Al thanked Barry and the Public Works Committee for their work on water upgrade project.

Public Works **Bob Frazier**

Bob reported that the water upgrade project is continuing to progress. All major mechanical equipment has been installed, and the system is largely ready for operation. Final approval from the Rhode Island Department of Health is required before the system can begin filtration and chlorination. Upon full operational approval, the system should be fully functional within a month.

Next Bob raised the condition of the District's roads, stating that significant deterioration has occurred due to winter freeze-thaw cycles and heavy vehicle traffic. Discussion ensued and it was agreed that a chip seal project is needed and should ideally be completed before peak summer usage. Debbie noted that given the potential cost, the project will require a formal RFP process. An update on the project will be given at the next meeting.

Community Property **Al Bartosic for Mark Alperin**

Al reminded the board that the existing lawn maintenance contract with General Lawn Care ("GLC") had expired at the end of 2025 and that Mark Alperin has publicly requested bids for the contract and has received two proposals. Al shared the details of each and noted that Mark has recommended that the District continue with GLC, who offered similar services at pricing consistent with their previous agreement. A **motion** was made to approve the three-year lawn maintenance contract with GLC, and for the Moderator or his designee to execute the contract on behalf of the District. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all in attendance voting in favor (except the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

6. Managers' Report

Merchandise Sales **Julie Low**

Julie proposed making changes to the annual spring mailing to save printing and mailing costs and ease the manpower needed for distribution. The proposal involves reducing the number of printed items significantly and mailing those directly. The remaining materials will be distributed electronically via email and/or made available on the District website. Discussion ensued and the board suggested potential future enhancements, including the use of QR codes to link printed materials to online content.

Beaches and Dunes **Debbie Dupre for June Cairns and Cindy Rice Kirkland**

Debbie raised the ongoing vandalism of beach fencing, including unauthorized postings, graffiti, and removal of fence posts for use in bonfires. Several suggestions were offered, including regular community email reminders, more immediate repair of damaged fencing, and clearer policies regarding what types of postings are allowed on community bulletin boards.

Tennis **Mark McEnroe**

Mark McEnroe reported on the condition of the tennis courts, noting significant cracking and that deterioration is accelerating. He proposed two options: a short-term repair estimated at approximately $20,000, which would provide a temporary fix with no long-term guarantee, or a full reconstruction estimated at approximately $200,000, which would provide a substantially longer useful life. Given that $75,000 has already been set aside for a full rebuild, the Board questioned the value of investing in a temporary repair if a full reconstruction is expected in the near future. Discussion ensued with the Board preferring to defer repairs and instead pursue a full reconstruction. The Board agreed that, if approved, reconstruction could be financially feasible as early as spring 2027. Discussion continued on whether it should be a Board of Governors decision to allocate that much of the District money toward tennis without asking the community. It was discussed whether the issue should be presented at the Annual Meeting and will be revisited at the May meeting. The courts will remain open in the interim, with users advised that they do so at their own risk. Mark has agreed to explore adding "at your risk" signage.

7. Adjournment

A **motion** was made to adjourn at approximately 10:56 am. The **motion** was **seconded and passed** with all members of the Board of Governors in attendance voting in favor (other than the Moderator, who under the District's By-Laws only votes in the case of a tie).

Respectfully submitted,

Debbie Dupre, Clerk
Quonochontaug Central Beach Fire District